

FOREIGN SERVICE (FS) ASSIGNMENTS

1. PURPOSE

This Directive establishes Agency objectives, policies, and procedures regarding selection for FS assignments and tours of duty. The Directive covers members of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) FS assigned to positions at foreign posts and within the United States and its territories.

2. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

This Directive replaces APHIS Directives 417.8, FS Rotational Assignments, dated 10/22/87, which expired, and 417.3, FS Tours of Duty, dated 9/27/83.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of selection for FS assignments are to:

- a. Maintain the most effective staffing of positions, consistent with principles and requirements of the Foreign Service Act of 1980,
- b. Be consistent with Agency budget and staff year limitations, and
- c. Meet the career interests and aspirations of APHIS FS personnel.

4. POLICY

APHIS FS assignment policy requires that at least 50 percent of the assignment selections during any calendar year must come from the International Services (IS) Resource Management Staff's (RMS) recommended reassignment list supplied to the IS Deputy Administrator (DA) in February. A minimum of 10 percent of all FS personnel will be reassigned annually.

The FS assignment policy addresses: 1) assignments to foreign posts, and 2) rotations to domestic posts.

- a. Assignments to Foreign Posts (From the United States or Any Other Foreign Post).

Consistent with objectives in section 1., APHIS selects and assigns FS employees to positions at foreign posts based on a combination of the following factors:

- (1) Fulfills current and long-range staffing needs of the FS.
- (2) Ensures a reasonable sharing of service at hardship posts.

(3) Ensures that employees serve in a variety of positions in foreign countries/regions for maximum exposure and development of skills.

(4) Accommodate individual employee preferences as to the area, post, or type of assignment, including training and long range career interests and aspirations; and gives consideration to family status, including educational needs of children and availability of suitable housing; health limitations of the employee and/or members of the family; personal problems, including those of a compassionate nature; and prior service, particularly at hardship posts.

(5) Fulfills statutory requirements concerning length of service both foreign and domestic.

(6) Makes effective use of abilities and skills of employees to the mutual advantage of the employees and the FS, provides appropriate orientation and on the job training, and stimulates employees to improve their qualifications and capabilities.

(7) Supports management flexibility to assign employees from location to location whether within the United States or abroad to accommodate differences in specialties/classes, grades, developmental requirements, and needs of the FS.

(8) Guarantees that candidates will be considered without discrimination for any non-merit reason such as race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical or mental handicap, or membership/nonmembership in an employee organization.

b. Rotations to Domestic Posts (From a Foreign Post).

APHIS selects and rotates FS employees to domestic posts based on a principle supported by the Foreign Service Act of 1980 that, after assignment at foreign locations, an employee will be rotated to a position in the United States for the purposes listed below plus all components listed under section 3.a.

(1) To utilize the specialized knowledge gained during foreign duty to enhance operational and administrative activities;

(2) To provide the employee the opportunity to gain a more complete knowledge of the United States Department of Agriculture and APHIS policies, programs, objectives, and developments, as well as management concepts;

(3) To take advantage of career development opportunities through orientation and training; and

(4) To provide the employee and family the opportunity to reacquaint themselves with U.S. culture.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. IS DA will provide overall leadership to the FS assignments process, and make final decisions regarding all APHIS FS assignments.

b. IS/RMS manages the FS assignments process. RMS will coordinate and recommend to the IS DA APHIS FS assignments and will provide or coordinate all required administrative support and information needed (e.g., personnel, fiscal).

c. IS Manaaement Team will provide insight and knowledge of FS personnel and programs to assist the IS DA in making personnel selections.

d. Human Resources Division will provide policy guidance.

e. Recruitment and Development will provide direction on Individual Development Plans, training, and career development.

f. Supervisors will be aware of employee assignment status and interests and will facilitate communication among employees, management, and RMS.

g. Employees will provide timely and accurate responses to requests for information, and report to their assigned post or face administrative action.

6. ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

The Guide attached includes specific information on FS assignment procedures and cycles, the duration of assignments, selection criteria, assignment categories, and definitions.

7. INQUIRIES

Inquiries should be directed through administrative channels to the IS/RMS servicing personnel office.

/s/ Kevin Shea

Acting Deputy Administrator for Management and Budget

Attachment

**PLEASE SEE HARD COPY OR CONTACT MSD, POLICY AND
PROGRAM MANAGEMENT BRANCH, THROUGH FTS2000 OR ON 301-
734-5524 FOR THE PAPER COPY OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE
ASSIGNMENTS PROCEDURES.**